

Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS), the Administration for Children and Families is pleased to request nominations for the 2003 **Adoption Excellence Awards**. These awards demonstrate our national commitment to rebuild the lives of the 542,000 children in foster care and to achieve permanency for the 65,000 of those who are waiting for adoption. **The Department will honor those States, agencies, organizations, businesses and individuals that have demonstrated excellence in providing stable, permanent homes for our nation's children in foster care.**

The Department invites you to nominate candidates for these prestigious awards. (Self-nominations will be accepted.) Nominations will be reviewed and award winners recommended by a panel of recognized experts in the adoption field, including members from Federal and State agencies. To assist you in the nomination process, you will find enclosed a description of the award categories, eligibility and selection criteria, and a nomination form. To review the list and descriptions of the 2002 awardees, you may visit our web site at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/initiatives/aeawards02.htm>

All nominations must be **received by Thursday, July 31, 2003**, and should be sent to: Adoption Excellence Awards, Children's Bureau, USDHHS, Room 2312, 330 C Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20447, Attn: LaChundra Thomas. For more information about the awards, please contact LaChundra Thomas, at (202) 205-8252 or lthomas@acf.hhs.gov.

Take a few minutes to recognize a person or program that has shown dedication, innovation and accomplishment in providing safe, permanent, loving homes for America's waiting children.

Sincerely,

Joan E. Ohl
Commissioner

Enclosures